



Effectiveness of community policing and crime rate in Suleja, Nigeria

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General Note

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ABSTRACT

Crime which is a negative impact of rapid rate of urbanization is one of the major social problems facing Nigeria today. Countries, many communities, neighborhoods and governments have made increasing recourse to both formal and informal security providers among them is community policing, as a response to these security challenges. In the light of the foregoing, this study examines the effectiveness of community policing on crime reduction in Suleja, Nigeria. In carrying out this study, the socio-economic characteristics of residents, factors responsible for introduction of community policing, strategies adopted and its effectiveness and

rating of crime after the emergence of community policing were examined. Routine activity theory and Broken Window theory provided an anchor for the study and both multi-stage and systematic sampling techniques were adopted. A total 294 questionnaires were administered to adult residents of the study area and chi-square analysis was used to examine the relationship between crime rate and effectiveness of community policing. The study revealed that increase in crime wave (50.3%) was the major factor for introduction of community policing, 26.9% stated that police ineffectiveness was another major reason. 55.4% of the respondents revealed that neighborhood watch is the major strategy used by the community in the area in combating crime, this was followed by 23.1% stated that foot patrol was the strategy used by the community in the area in combating crime. Hashimi community recorded the highest index (4.14) signifying high level of effectiveness in community policing strategy adopted. Also, Hashimi recorded a low index of 1.14 in rate of crime after adoption of the strategies. The researched revealed that a strong significant statistical (74%) association exists between crime rate and community policing, with a Cramer's V of 0.04. The paper concludes by recommending that extreme poverty and unemployment should address, and also creation of awareness of the importance of public and government participation in community policing.

Keywords: Community policing, Crime, Crime rate, Urbanization, Nigeria.

1. INTRODUCTION

Crime which is a negative impact of rapid rate of urbanization is one of the major social problems facing Nigeria today (Junaid, 2017). It evident as no day passes without the national dailies resounding report of one form of crime or the other, alternating from aggravated assault, child sexual abuse, murder, rape, political assassination, kidnapping, armed robbery, burglary, motor vehicle theft, terrorism, cybercrimes, child trafficking among others (Soyombo, 2009). Countries, many communities, neighborhoods and governments have made increasing recourse to both formal and informal security providers among them is community policing (CP), as a response to these security challenges. Community policing (CP) is the act of defending, preserving or regulating law and order in a given community in police style, either with or without police attendance. The overarching goal of community policing (CP) is not just to capture offenders but to decrease crimes by getting to the root of the causes through collaboration of people and police in the community. Nigeria community policing strategy takes various forms ranging from, Peace and security committee, landlords and tenants security harmony in which firm able bodied men in the community are assembled to watch over the community rotationally. Through bodies such as civilian joint task force (in the northern region), Vigilante service group among others. CP in Nigeria has abetted the Nigeria police and other security agencies in crime deterrence in each area through cordial relationship between the community people and the security agencies. This has aided the security agencies to clampdown evil perpetrators/criminals in several societies. Omowunmi (2016) stated that in spite of these conscious efforts it is still noticed that there is no harmonious working affiliation between communities' police in Northern Nigeria, and Suleja being among the cities. The unharmonious relationship associated to the distrust between the people and the formal police based on reports of corruption, extortion, and breaking of the laws enforcement. Also the police are occasionally against community policing as a result some of some community members taking laws into their hands and instead of collaborating with the formal body to right charge perpetrators of the criminal acts. There is no cooperative effort between the community people and the police in clipping crime in Suleja Nigeria and there are certain challenges facing effective community policing in Nigeria. As such this paper examines the effectiveness of community policing on crime rate in Suleja, Nigeria.

Theoretical and conceptual framework

Routine Activity Theory

This was first formulated by Lawrence E. Cohen and Marcus Felson (1979) but later developed by Felson. Contrary to the theories of criminality, which are balanced on the figure of the criminal and the psychological, biological, or social factors that motivated the criminal act. The attention of routine activity is the study of crime as an event by highlighting its relation to space and time and accentuating its ecological nature and the implications. In their early formulation, Cohen and Felson hypothesized that changes in the structure of the patterns of daily activity of people in cities following World War II could explain the rise in crime that had occurred, according to leading studies at the time. Their hypothesis was that post modernity had aided the conjunction in space and time of likely offenders with the goal of committing crimes against suitable targets in the present of deficient guardians. From this, they coined two apparently simple ideas with significant implications: first, that the opportunity for crime may depend on a configuration of distinct (though not disaggregated) elements of the aggressor or criminal; second, a correlate of the first, that the

absence of either of the first two elements (aggressor and target) or the presence of the third (capable guardians) would be sufficient in itself to prevent a potential criminal event.

Broken Windows Theory (BWT)

The theory suggests "that there is direct connection between the appearance of disorder and actual crime" (Giddens, 2004:214). Giddens (2004), Haralambos and Holborn (2004), Jones (2005), and Inciardi (2007) noted that when a lone broken window is allowed to go unrepaired in a neighborhood (i.e. when prostitution, drunkenness, pick-pocketing among are overlooked as minor offences etc), it sends a wrong signal to latent offenders that neither police nor local residents are committed to the reservation of the community. And with time, the broken windows will be joined by further signs of disorder, vandalism, and abandoned vehicles (the negligible crime will graduate to bigger ones like rape, burglary, fraud, kidnapping, assassination). As such, the area will begin a gradual process of deterioration and communal illness will flourish and law abiding citizens will be afraid and seek to leave and will be replaced by deviant (Giddens, 2004). Disorder reduces the extent to which the local community could exercise control over its own affairs and crime might increase as a consequence of this (Skogan, 2006).

BWT can be incorporated into the concept of CP in the sense that shared effort by the police and community dwellers can help lessen the rate of crime in the community, when police see residents as partners in development and vice versa. In concord with the Yoruba proverb that says "the insect that destroys the vegetable resides right inside the vegetable," BWT assumes that most neighborhood crimes are more often committed by offenders who reside near the victims; this makes crime primarily a local problem which can best be solved locally. BWT is very advantageous in elucidating the synergy between the police and the community in crime detection because with the constant contact of the police and the citizen, both minor and major problems of crimes will be solved and it will reduce crime and fear of crime in the community. The theory encourages the public and the police to examine crime, disorder and develop solutions towards delinquency.

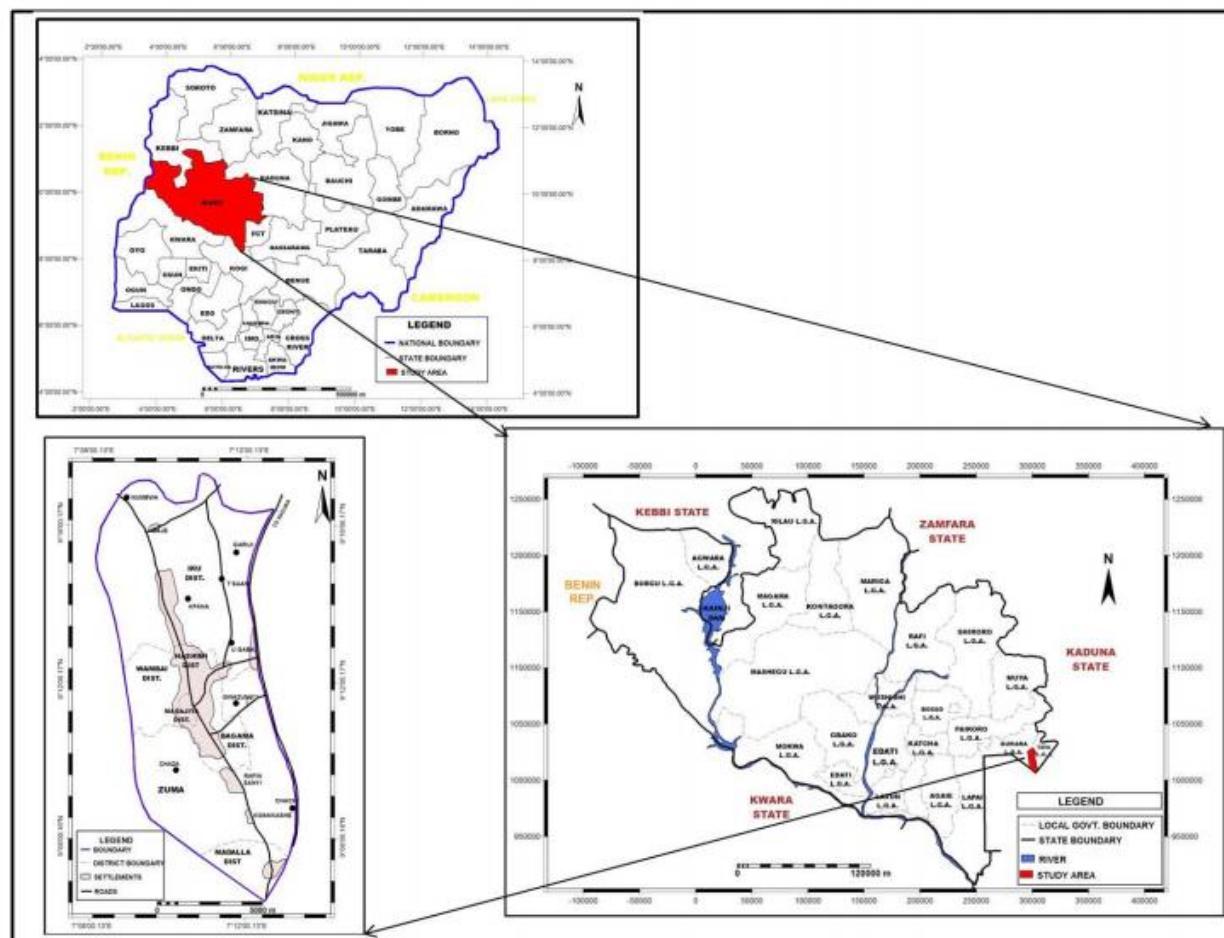


Figure 1 Administrative map of Suleja Source: Department of Urban and Regional Planning Federal University of Technology, Minna, 2018.

Finally, another justification for adopting BWT as the theoretical orientation, according to Haralambos and Holborn (2007: 354) is that:

... it is crucial according to the theory to maintain that some people are born with a predisposition towards crime. The potential for criminality is more likely to be realized if they are not properly socialized. If parents fail to teach them right from wrong, and particularly if they fail to punish them immediately for misbehaving, those who are prone to crime become much more likely to commit criminal acts in later life. Freed from close observation by respectable members and police, those inclined to criminality will commit more street crime. If residents believe attempts are being made to maintain law and order, they will be more likely to report crime and discourage incivilities and antisocial behavior in public places.

Study Area

Suleja Local Government Area (LGA) in Niger State, Nigeria (figure 1) lies between latitudes 9°6'13.8" and 9°17'49.35" North of the Equator and longitude 7°6'58.6' and 7°12'18.41' East of Greenwich Meridian. Suleja LGA has a population of 216,578 with 10 political wards (NPC, 2006). The deliberate location of Suleja has had the most reflective effect on its development and its probable advance in the near future. It is a rapidly growing medium-sized city whose growth was in part attributed to its closeness to Abuja, the nation's capital city with a distance of about 70 kilometres (see Figure 1).

2. METHODOLOGY

Cross-sectional research survey design was adopted. Both primary and secondary data were adopted. The primary data were sourced from the field through self-administered questioners, face-to-face interviews and direct observation. Questionnaire was used to obtain information on socio-economic/characteristics of respondents (i.e. age, sex, education etc), factors that led to the emergence of community policing in combating crime; the various strategies used by residents, its effectiveness, the challenges in crime prevention and control. Secondary sources were mainly library research, analysis of related documents and extensive review of the literature, internet search, journals as well as papers prepared at workshops, seminars and conferences were also consulted for useful information in the course of this research. Multi-stage sampling technique was adopted for this research. The first stage was to identify the various localities in Suleja local Government Area; this was done by obtaining information from the Osun State Ministry of Local Government and chieftaincy Affairs. The second stage is to identify a total number of known 14 various localities in this local government through ground trothing. The third stage was to stratify these localities into area of high rate of criminal activities and areas with low rate of criminal activities. The fourth stage was randomly select three localities from the areas with high rate of criminal activities and another three localities from areas with low rate of criminal activities which gives a total of 6 localities for the study. The fifth stage was characterized with sampling 3% of the total identified housing unit in the 6 localities which resulted to 294 questionnaires to be administered. The sixth stage was to determine the total number of houses to be sampled during the course of the study. Google earth and ground trothing were used to identify the total number of housing in the selected localities which gave a total of 9,777 houses in the six (6) localities. Systematic sampling was used to determine building which questionnaires was administered to. The sampling interval which was arrived at was 33 which indicate that one building from every 33 houses in the various localities. An individual from a building was randomly selected to be sampled, which can either be the landlord or tenant as the case may be, in a situation were by the head of the household was not available, the oldest member of the household i.e above the age of 18years old was interviewed with the use of questionnaire. Also, in other to determine the relationship between crime rate and community policing in Suleja local government chi square analysis was carried out. In other to analyze the level of effectiveness of strategies adopted across the localities and crime rate which were measured using likert scale, it was done by attaching values of weight to different level of responses as shown below.

Very often	=	4
Always	=	3
Often	=	2
Not at all	=	1
NR (f)	=	Number of Respondents (Questionnaires)
SWV	=	Sum of Weighted Value
Mean (\bar{X})	=	$\sum \text{SWV}/\text{NR (f)}$
Number of variables	=	$\text{SWV}/\text{NR (f)} - \bar{X}$
d^2	=	Standard Deviation

The sum of the weighted value was obtained by summing up the product of the total numbers of response to each variables and the weight attached to each rating ($a \times 5$) + ($b \times 4$) + ($c \times 3$) + ($d \times 2$) + ($e \times 1$): the mean used in the course of the computation was obtained by adding SWV and dividing it with the total number of variables. The deviation (which is also used as frequency index) and standard deviation were calculated also to be able to establish the degree of effectiveness of community policing strategies adopted and crime rate (table 1).

Table 1 Sample Frame and size for Data Collection

S/N	Localities Covered	Total Number of Housing Unit in the Area	Sample size of 3%
1	Mandalla	2,634	79
2	Bagama	2,180	65
3	Wambai	1,998	60
4	Iku	757	23
5	Gariji	1629	49
6	Hashimi	579	18
Total		9,777	294

3. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Socio-Economic Characteristics of respondents

The main socio-economic characteristics considered in the study area includes: Sex, Age, Marital Status, Level of Education, Occupation, and Length of Stay. Table 2 reveals that respondents were composed of both sex, though female participation during survey was high with 61.6% comparing to the male sex with 38.4%. Filling this kind of forms and participating in different issues regarding community policing is mainly the responsibility of the female who is spend most of thier hours at home. Same is the result at the communities' level where female sex dominates during the survey. The study also reveals that 30.3% of the respondents were between the ages of 18-25years, 47.3% were 26-45years of age, and 22.4% were between the age of 46 and above. The observed prevalence of people age between 18-25 years among the respondents might be connected to the migration of active age-group from surrounding communities in search for opportunities. As stated by Salami (2019), who revealed that the probability of migration decreases with age and explained that this may be due to psychological cost of migration associated with people in the active age group. Which also mean that there are more active age group could participate in community policing. Study on the marital status of the respondents revealed that 51.0%, of the sampled population were married. 42.0 % was single, 4.4% were widowed and 2.0% of the sampled population which is the least was divorced. Observed high incidences of married among the respondents might be attributed to socio-cultural and religious believes of northern Nigerians (Salami and Otokiti, 2019). As, married residents, are more proactive, in other to protect their wards. The research also revealed that generally, 82.0% of respondents which represents the highest percentage of the sampled population have tertiary qualification, 8.8% have Secondary education, and 3.7% of the respondents own a primary school leaving certificate as their highest educational qualification while the least, 5.4% of the respondents have no formal education. The high percentage of people with tertiary education implies that there would high percentage of people that would be easily enlightened and even provide intellectual suggestions during meetings.

The major occupation of the community dwellers is government which accounts for 39.5% of the population, followed by trading with 12.9%, followed by farming with 12.6%, and other occupation (like artisan, apprenticeship among others) accounted for 35%. Research on the length of stay of respondents revealed that 27.2% of the respondents have lived in the community for over 10 years, 26.9% of the respondents have lived in the community for between 7-9 years, 22.8% of the respondents have lived in the community for between 4-6 years, 11.9% of the population have lived between 1-3 years while only 11.2% of the population have lived in the community for less than 1 years.

Factors responsible for the introduction of community policing in Suleja Local Government Area

Increase in crime wave, police ineffectiveness, lack of police presence accounted for 50.3%, 26.9%, and 16.0% responses respectively, as revealed by research, are the factors underlining the introduction of community policing in Suleja LGA as presented in table 3. Relatively, across the community, the percentage of respondents who stated that increase in crime wave was one of the factors responsible for the introduction of community policing in Mandalla, Bagama, Wambai, Iku, Gariji and Hashimi accounted for 12.9%,

7.8%, 10.5%, 3.1%, 1.0%, and 15.0% respectively. Also, 7.1%, 5.8%, 5.1%, 2.0%, 2.4%, and 4.4% in Mandalla, Bagama, Wambai, Iku, Gariji and Hashimi respectively revealed that ineffectiveness of Nigeria police force brought about community policing initiative. As such, the research concludes that crime wave has been the major factor for the introduction of community policing, which is in line with the findings of Groenewald & Peake (2004).

Table 2 Socio-Economic Characteristics

Sex of Respondents	Frequency	Percent
Male	113	38.4
Female	181	61.6
Age		
18-25 years	89	30.3
26-45 years	139	47.3
46 years and above	66	22.4
Marital Status		
Single	126	42.9
Married	150	51
Divorced	6	2
Widow	12	4.1
Level of Education		
Primary	11	3.7
Secondary	26	8.8
Tertiary	241	82
No formal education	16	5.4
Occupation		
Civil Servant	116	39.5
Farming	37	12.6
Trading	38	12.9
Other	103	35
Length of Stay		
< 1 year	33	11.2
1- 3 years	35	11.9
4- 6 years	67	22.8
7- 9 years	79	26.9
> 10 years	80	27.2

Source: Author's Field Survey, 2019

Table 3 Factors responsible for the introduction of community policing in Suleja Local Government Area

Locality	Reasons							
	Police Ineffectiveness		Lack Of Police Presence		Increase In Crime Wave		Don't Know	
	No. of Respondents	%	No. of Respondents	%	No. of Respondents	%	No. of Respondents	%
Mandalla	21.0	7.1	6.0	2.0	38.0	12.9	0.0	0.0
Bagama	17.0	5.8	9.0	3.1	23.0	7.8	0.0	0.0
Wambai	15.0	5.1	9.0	3.1	31.0	10.5	5.0	1.7
Iku	6.0	2.0	5.0	1.7	9.0	3.1	3.0	1.0
Gariji	7.0	2.4	3.0	1.0	3.0	1.0	5.0	1.7
Hashimi	13.0	4.4	15.0	5.1	44.0	15.0	7.0	2.4
Total	79.0	26.9	47.0	16.0	148.0	50.3	20.0	6.8

Source: Author's Field Survey, 2018

Strategies used by the community in your area in combating crime

Several strategies were adopted by different communities in Suleja LGA in combatting crime. It was revealed that neighborhood watch, foot patrol, and stop and search, accounted for 55.4%, 23.1%, and 15.3% respectively as stated by the respondents, were the strategies adopted (table 4). Relatively, across Mandalla, Bagama, Wambai, Iku, Gariji and Hashimi the percentage of respondents who stated that neighborhood watch is the strategy adopted accounted 11.6%, 9.2%, 10.9%, 3.7%, 2.0%, and 18.0% respectively. In addition, foot patrol as a strategy adopted across Mandalla, Bagama, Wambai, Iku, Gariji and Hashimi communities, accounted for 5.8%, 3.7%, 4.1%, 2.0%, 2.7%, and 4.8% responses respectively (table 1.4). It can therefore be deduced from the findings on the adopted community policing, that Neighborhood watch is the most widely used strategy community, this which complements the findings of Docobo (2005). Docobo (2005), found out that the major strategy adopted by community in community policing is through communal watch.

Table 4 Strategies used by the community in your area in combating crime

Locality	Strategies		Neighborhood Watch		Foot Patrol		Stop And Search		Others	
	No. of Respondents	%	No. of Respondents	%	No. of Respondents	%	No. of Respondents	%	No. of Respondents	%
Mandalla	34.0	11.6	17.0	5.8	14.0	4.8	0.0	0.0		
Bagama	27.0	9.2	11.0	3.7	6.0	2.0	5.0	1.7		
Wambai	32.0	10.9	12.0	4.1	11.0	3.7	5.0	1.7		
Iku	11.0	3.7	6.0	2.0	2.0	0.7	4.0	1.4		
Gariji	6.0	2.0	8.0	2.7	3.0	1.0	1.0	0.3		
Hashimi	53.0	18.0	14.0	4.8	9.0	3.1	3.0	1.0		
Total	163.0	55.4	68.0	23.1	45.0	15.3	18.0	6.1		

Source: Author's Field Survey, 2018

Level of effectiveness of the Strategies Adopted

Findings on the level of effectiveness of the strategies adopted by various communities in Suleja LGA, revealed that Hashimi community has the highest ranked index of 4.14 as presented in table 5. As such, this implies that the strategy that were adopted in Hashimi community were very effective in curbing crime rate. This is complimented by the findings in table 4 on Hashimi community that neighborhood watch was the major strategy adopted. This is followed closely by Mandalla community with index of 4.11. It can therefore be stated that neighborhood watch an effective community policing strategy in combatting crime.

Table 5 Level of effectiveness of the Strategies Adopted across the Localities

Locality	Levels				SWV	NR	<u>SWV</u> NR	X	D	D ²
	4	3	2	1						
Mandalla	13	41	5	6	191	65	2.94		4.11	16.88
Bagama	18	29	2	0	163	49	3.33		3.71	13.77
Wambai	14	35	5	6	177	60	2.95	0.730	3.73	13.93
Iku	3	8	2	10	50	23	2.17		1.97	3.86
Gariji	6	9	3	0	57	18	3.17		1.97	3.87
Hashimi	15	45	7	12	221	79	2.79		4.14	17.15
					859					

Source: Author's Field Survey, 2018

Rating of crime rate after the emergence of Community Policing in the Area

Findings on crime rate after the emergence of community policing in various communities in Suleja LGA, revealed that Mandalla community has the highest ranked index of crime, with a value of 3.60 as presented in table 6. As such, this implies that crime rate was still at the high side even after the innovation of community policing. However, this was relative to Hashimi community which as

a low crime rate index of 1.14. This low index of crime rate recorded in Hashimi community is due to the effectiveness of community policing strategy adopted, as revealed in table 5. It can therefore be concluded that neighborhood watch is an effective community policing strategy and in other reduce or cut in totality crime, the strategy should be adequately implemented.

Table 6 Rating of crime rate after the emergence of Community Policing in the Area

Locality	Levels				SWV	NR	SWV	X	D	D ²
	4	3	2	1			NR			
Mandalla	12	18	33	2	170	65	2.94		3.60	12.97
Bagama	8	15	24	2	127	49	3.33		3.08	9.46
Wambai	7	14	33	6	142	60	2.95	0.638	3.54	12.52
Iku	3	14	6	0	66	23	2.17		2.45	6.02
Gariji	6	39	27	7	202	79	2.79		4.01	16.07
Hashimi	3	6	4	5	43	18	3.17		1.14	1.29
					750					

Source: Author's Field Survey, 2018

In order to analyze the relationship between crime rate and community policing in Suleja LGA, Chi square analysis was carried out. The result of Cramer's V of 0.04 shows that there is significant statistical association between crime rate and community policing. The also the association is revealed to be a very strong one with Linear-by-Linear Association put at 74% (table 7- 9). The result of this association is further complimented by the cross tabulation of the effectiveness of community policing and crime rate. When community policing is less effective, 1% of the respondents reported crime that occur very often, 1.4% of them stated that crime occur always, 4.1% reported that crime was just often and as high as 16% reported that no crime was recorded. This is relative to when community policing is ineffective, then 1.4% of the respondents reported that crime was occur very often, 5.1% stated that crime occurs always, 17% reported that crime occur often and 6.5% reported that crime does not occur at all (see table 7).

Table 7 Relationship between crime rate and community policing

If yes, how effective is the strategy in combating crime?	Since the emergence of community policing in your area, how often does crime occur?							
	very often		always		Often		not at all	
	No. of Respondents	%	No. of Respondents	%	No. of Respondents	%	No. of Respondents	%
Very effective	3	1	4	1.4	8	2.7	98	33.3
Effective	3	1	0	0	12	4.1	47	16
Ineffective	4	1.4	15	5.1	50	17	19	6.5
I don't know	0	0	10	3.4	12	4.1	9	3.1
Total	10	3.4	29	9.9	82	27.9	173	58.8

Source: Author's Field Survey, 2018

Table 8 Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	24.554 ^a	9	.004
Likelihood Ratio	27.206	9	.001
Linear-by-Linear Association	3.201	1	.074
N of Valid Cases	294		

a. 5 cells (31.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .82.

Table 9 Symmetric Measures

		Value	Approx. Sig.
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.289	.004
	Cramer's V	.167	.004
N of Valid Cases		294	

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Municipal insecurity remains one of the major challenges to overall development in Nigeria as safety and urban development are intertwined and cannot be divorced from each other. For any meaningful development and renaissance of local economic development to take place within the city the issue of urban violence needs to be resolved. Based on the key findings of this study, the following key points are recommended for government officers and prominent stakeholders with special obligation on community policing and crime preclusion to solve problems that hamper the efficiency of community policing on crime prevention in the study area. To this end, the research recommends the following:

Extreme poverty and unemployment has visible effect on the occurrence of crime. As such, Suleja town administration and other concerned governmental or NGOs should harmonize in an effort to alleviate extreme poverty and creating job opportunities in the town. There should be a wide spread awareness of the opportunities for participation community policing project, residents of Suleja LGA, should be aware of community policing efforts in their neighborhoods and also participate in community policing efforts.

Stakeholder's involvement has a positive influence on the performance of community policing project and therefore participation of community in dealing with complex issues should improve the performance of community policing project and also all key stakeholders in community policing project should fully encourage implementation of the reform.

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